

STATE SENATOR • JIM BARCIA • 31ST DISTRICT

Barcia Press Release

P.O. Box 30036 • Lansing • Michigan • 48909-7536 • 517-373-1777 • Fax: 517-373-5871
E-mail: senjbarcia@senate.michigan.gov • www.senate.michigan.gov/dem/SD31



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CONTACT: Sen. Jim Barcia (D-Bay City)
(517) 373-1777

BEACH MAINTENANCE LEGISLATION PASSES SENATE WITH UNANIMOUS VOTE

Senator Barcia calls compromise bill fair, practical and sensible

(LANSING)- State Senator Jim Barcia (D-Bay City) praised the work of everyone involved in negotiations to resolve the contentious issue of allowing shoreline property owners to maintain their beaches. After intense negotiations over several weeks, a compromise bill encompassing parts of Senate Bill 244, introduced by Senator Barcia, HB 4257, sponsored by Representative Brian Palmer (R-Romeo), and language worked out between members of Save Our Shoreline (SOS) and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) passed the Senate today on a unanimous vote of 37-0, with one member excused.

“I have been working on this issue for over three years now, so it is gratifying to see that our shoreline residents will finally be able to maintain their beaches without fear of penalty,” said Barcia. “I am pleased that the final version of this bill received strong bi-partisan support. It is a testament to the dedication of the leadership team representing SOS and Steve Chester and his staff at DEQ, that what began as such a contentious issue is being resolved with such widespread agreement.”

HB 4257, as passed, allows for 2 pilot areas to be established in the Saginaw Bay and Grand Traverse regions where property owners would be able to maintain their beaches and remove vegetation without seeking a permit from the DEQ. In areas outside the pilot program, a general permit could be issued to individuals or local units of government to remove vegetation and practice other beach grooming.

“This bill retains the ability of the DEQ to maintain a permitting role in the vast majority of coastline along the Great Lakes, while giving property owners relief in the areas most adversely affected by low water levels,” said Barcia. “This bill is fair, practical and sensible.”

HB 4257 will now proceed to the House for concurrence and then onto the Governor’s desk where it is expected to be signed immediately.

State Senator Jim Barcia represents the 31st Senate District, which includes Arenac, Bay, Huron, Sanilac, and Tuscola counties. He is a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, where he serves as Vice-Chair of the subcommittees on Agriculture, Environmental Quality, Natural Resources, and Transportation.

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